

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 22<sup>ND</sup> FEBRUARY, 2016

REFERENCE FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH): 1<sup>ST</sup> FEBRUARY, 2016

“ YOUNG CARER SERVICES: UPDATE REPORT (DSS) –

The Interim Head of Business Management and Innovation presented the report, the purpose of which was to update Members on support services for young carers.

As a background summary, the report advised that young carers were defined as children and young people under the age of 18 who had caring responsibilities for someone who had a physical or mental illness, a physical or learning disability or a drug or alcohol problem. The person that they looked after may be a parent, a brother or sister, a grandparent or other relative. They may provide practical or physical care, help with personal care, assistance with domestic tasks, and / or emotional support.

Regardless of their age, all carers had the right to an assessment of their needs as a carer. There was no specific legislation which referred to young carers as a distinct category, although each Local Authority had a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area who were in need and to promote the upbringing of such children wherever possible by their families, through providing an appropriate range of services.

Where a child was providing a substantial amount of care on a regular basis for a parent, they would be entitled to an assessment of their ability to care and the Local Authority must take that assessment into account when deciding what community care services should be made available to the parent.

A previous report to the Scrutiny Committee in January 2014 described joint working between the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, the Vale of Glamorgan Council and Cardiff City Council to meet responsibilities introduced by the Carer Strategies (Wales) Measure, especially in respect of improving information and engagement with carers. Better support for young carers had been a key objective for this joint working.

A separate report in July 2014 focused on support for young carers and highlighted a scoping exercise to identify the number of young carers in primary and secondary schools in the Vale of Glamorgan.

Informed by the scoping exercise and the Task and Finish Group, the Vale of Glamorgan commissioned a Young Carers Project delivered through Cardiff YMCA. Entitled "Time For Me", this service provided opportunities for young carers to participate in social activities, events and short breaks outside the school and home environment. The report advised that starting in late 2014, the service was jointly funded by the Children and Young People's Partnership (via the Families First funding) and by Social Services. This would build on the previous delivery model by introducing more individual case work to support young carers to improve their educational attendance and attainment.

Since April 2015, from Quarter 2 reports which showed that there were currently 47 young carers accessing the project, six of these had received one to one support in the home. 22 young carers had gained skills and a certificate by attending a sailing residential. Evaluations showed a 100% positive feedback for the informal respite. Additionally, the fulltime Young Carers Project Worker for the Vale of Glamorgan had been working with the Council's Carers Development Officer in delivering a series of young carer awareness raising presentations to practitioners across the statutory sector and other organisations.

Under the auspices of the Carers Strategy Measure, staff from Social Services had been working with the young engagement workers from both the Vale and Cardiff, along with Cardiff YMCA, to consult with young carers. The purpose of these was to identify the information and support needs of young carers, particularly in relation to health services.

The report stated that at an initial meeting in November 2015, a group of young carers from the Vale and Cardiff came together to hear an explanation of the aims of the Carers Measure and to discuss potential for further engagement. As a result, 12 young people had volunteered to be involved in the planning of a wider consultation, which would include preparing and delivering a questionnaire, followed by a fun workshop to identify outcomes for statutory services to consider. It was hoped that this consultation would help establish a more regular dialogue between young carers, as a stakeholder group, and statutory services to help inform service delivery on an ongoing basis. Young carers would also benefit from extending the Carers Support Officer role to cover Children and Young People's Services. A part time Carers Support Officer had been appointed to support both parent carers and young carers in respect of their information and assessment needs. Work was ongoing to ensure that young carers were identified and referred appropriately to the targeted support that the Council had in place.

In terms of resources, the report advised that the Young Carers Project was a joint funded project between Families First and Social Services. Families First would contribute £40,000 per year until March 2017 and £10,000 was being made available from the carers services budget in Social Services.

A Committee Member raised two queries. His first query related to raising awareness of young carers within schools. In reply, the Interim Head of Business Management and Innovation indicated the key was around engagement with schools and the need to build and sustain working relationships. She also stated that the new Carer Support Workers would have an important role and it would be necessary to tailor how the service engages with schools. The Member's second query related to the use of the Carers Measure Funding for which £11,800 had been allocated to the Vale and Cardiff. For this, the Interim Head of Business Management and Innovation advised that a Carers Measure Group had been meeting regularly to discuss proposals around how the funding could be used and that the Group routinely considered the impact of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act.

With regard to a Member's query about the types of activities that were being provided to young carers, the Committee noted that a number of projects and social events were available. The Head of Children and Young People Services explained that the service had established the sort of activities that young carers wanted to participate in. Therefore, the service had moved away from the more standard activities such as bowling and going to the cinema and now more varied activities were available such as horse riding and yacht sailing. Feedback from young carers had indicated that they had valued the opportunity to spend time with other young carers and a period of respite had allowed them to feel refreshed. The service's aim was not to remove the carer's role from the young carers but to support them and their families so that young carers felt more resilient and confident.

In querying how the Council recognised young carers, the Committee noted that a new wellbeing survey was being rolled out to schools, which was called Selfie. The Committee requested that consideration be given to whether Selfie or a similar mechanism could be put in place in schools which would assist the Council to identify young carers and the Committee agreed for this to be considered by Cabinet. The Committee was also advised that specific details around how young carers were identified would be sent to Members via e-mail.

Further to these points, the Cabinet Member for Adult Services stated that it was important to remember the "all contacts count" approach and that the Council should look at more ways of identifying young carers. He also made mention of not losing sight of what health was doing, particularly around hospital discharges and whether parents would be relying on their children to look after them. He also alluded to the stigma in schools faced by young carers and the need to support young carers as much as possible.

Finally, the Committee agreed for a report updating on the developments around young carers to be provided on an annual basis.

Having considered the report, the Committee

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the work undertaken to support young carers in the Vale of Glamorgan be noted.
- (2) T H A T the report be referred to the Scrutiny Committee (Lifelong Learning) for its consideration.
- (3) T H A T the report be referred to Cabinet to highlight the need to develop further mechanisms to help identify young carers.
- (4) T H A T update reports be received by the Committee on an annual basis.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) To ensure that Members continue to exercise effective oversight of an important function undertaken by the Social Services Directorate.
- (2) At the request of the Scrutiny Committee (Lifelong Learning) to receive the report on an annual basis.
- (3) To help the Council develop ways around the identification of young carers.
- (4) To keep the Committee apprised of developments around young carers.”

Attached as Appendix – [Report to Scrutiny Committee \(Social Care and Health\): 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2016](#)